DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 120 RC 022 248

AUTHOR Price, Michael
TITLE Migration in Kentucky: Will the Circle Be Unbroken?
PUB DATE 1996-12-00
NOTE 7p.; In: Exploring the Frontier of the Future: How Kentucky Will Live, Learn and Work; see RC 022 247.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age Groups; *Educational Attainment; *Migration Patterns; Older Adults; Population Trends; Rural Areas; *Rural to Urban Migration; Trend Analysis; Urban Areas; Young Adults
IDENTIFIERS *Kentucky

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines Kentucky's history of net migration, the age and education of recent in-migrants and out-migrants, and implications of these trends for Kentucky in the next century. Kentucky's migration history for much of the 20th century reveals the departure of young adults from the state, an exodus from rural areas, and an attraction of migrants to the state's urban areas. Out-migration has resulted in a brain drain for rural areas because newcomers to the state's rural areas have been less educated than those leaving; on the other hand, recent migration to urban areas has enhanced the human capital of the state, as those coming in are slightly more educated than those leaving. Overall, migration signifies two important trends in Kentucky for the next century: the aging of the population, particularly in rural areas, due to continued youth out-migration and recent return migration of Kentucky-born retirees, and noneconomic migration. Data tables portray Kentucky net migration, 1910-1995; net migration in urban and rural Kentucky, 1940-1995; net migration by age, 1950-1990; and in-migrants and out-migrants by age and education in urban and rural Kentucky, 1985-1990. (Author/SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 438 120

Migration in Kentucky: Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

Kentucky's migration history for much of the 20th century reveals an exodus from rural areas and an attraction of migrants to the state's urban areas. Out-migration has resulted in a brain drain for rural areas because newcomers to the state's rural areas have been less educated than those leaving; on the other hand, recent migration in urban areas has enhanced the human capital of the state, as those coming in are slightly more educated than those leaving. Overall, migration signifies two important trends in Kentucky for the next century: the aging of the population and non-economic migration.

By Michael Price*
University of Louisville

In this twentieth century, Kentucky's most characteristic demographic event has been the departure of our native sons and daughters. The out-migration of young adults has plagued communities from Louisville to Pikeville to Fulton, often signifying opportunities lost for the places left behind. From 1910 to 1990, migrants leaving Kentucky have outnumbered those moving to the state by over one million. In the 1950s alone, the exchange of migrants over the state border resulted in a net loss of nearly 400,000 people. As the consequence of out-migration over decades, two of every five native-born Kentuckians alive in 1990 lived outside the Commonwealth.[1]

From 1990 to 1995, however, the tide of migration streams turned, and 82,000 more people moved into Kentucky than moved out. The only other period of sustained net in-migration in this century occurred during the 1970s. Is this recent population turnaround a harbinger of our demographic future as we enter the next century? Or is it only a temporary aberration, a short-lived demographic event that portends little about the size and composition of our communities or our emerging social order?

Recent migration to Kentucky has often been a homecoming. Many who left the state in their youth have returned for their retirement years. Among those 55 years old or older, one of every two migrants moving to Kentucky during the 1985-90 period was a native born Kentuckian.[2] This return of the natives is significant, not for the current volume of migration, but because it is part and parcel of more salient social demographic trends dealing with an aging population and non-economic migration.

In this chapter, we look at migration in Kentucky. To better understand where Kentucky is going, we need to better understand how Kentuckians are moving. One of the basic tenets of migration theory states that for every migration stream there is a counterstream.[3] Through this selective exchange of people and households, migration impacts the size, composition, and distribution of the population. Although migration has become an increasingly important component of growth and change in Kentucky, our knowledge of migration is often limited to the residual of the demographic equation.[4] The examination of migration residuals or nets shows how much a population changes as the result of the movement of people, but not how it changes. Migration activity is better explained

RC 022248

* The author wishes to thank Drs. Thomas Ford and John F. Watkins for their reviews and significant contributions to an earlier draft of this paper, and Martye Scobee and Thomas Sawyer for their technical assistance.

[1] U.S. Bureau of the Census. *1990 Census of population and housing*. Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). United States (1 percent).

[2] U.S. Bureau of the Census. *1990 Census of population and housing*. Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Kentucky (5 percent).

[3] Ravenstein, E. G. (1885, June). The laws of migration. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 48*, Part 2.

[4] Net migration over a specific period is equal to the population at the end of the period minus the population at the beginning, minus live births plus deaths occurring over the period.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

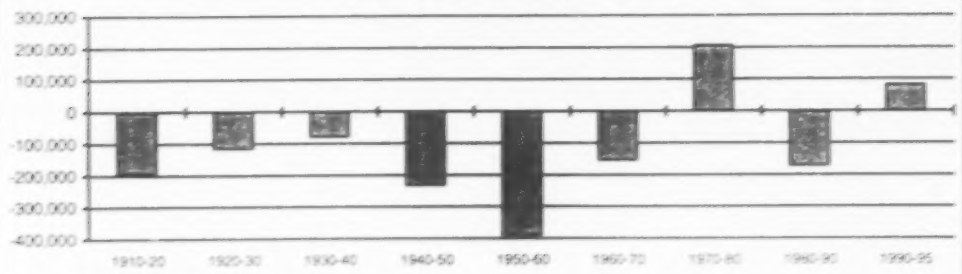
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Michal Smith
Mello

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

by looking at the volume and characteristics of migrants moving in and those moving out. This chapter examines not only Kentucky's history of net migration, but also the age and education of recent in-migrants and out-migrants, and discusses implications of these trends for Kentucky in the next century.

FIGURE 1.1
Net Migration in Kentucky, 1910-1995



Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service and calculations of author.

Rural Losses and Urban Gains

Kentucky's migration history in the 20th century reveals a dramatic pattern of uneven development between rural and urban areas. Urban-rural are defined herein by the Census Bureau's metropolitan county designation. Metropolitan status is examined after each census based on changes in population size and density, commuting patterns, and employment composition. Urban areas have generally had net gains from migration in this century, resulting in the exchange of relatively large volumes of in- and out-migrants (see, for example, Table 1.3). However, a massive exodus from rural areas has often overshadowed net in-migration in the state's urban areas. As shown in Table 1.1, from 1940 to 1970, rural Kentucky had net out-migration of 900,000. Meanwhile, the state's urban areas attracted 136,000 more migrants than departed. During the 1950s, net migration decreased the population of rural areas by 20 percent.

TABLE 1.1
Net Migration in Urban and Rural Kentucky 1940-1995*

	State		Urban Areas**		Rural Areas**	
Period	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1940-1950	-232,431	-8.2	83,119	11.8	-315,550	-14.7
1950-1960	-389,546	-13.2	33,535	4.0	-423,081	-20.2
1960-1970	-154,046	-5.1	19,589	1.7	-173,635	-9.1
1970-1980	206,237	6.4	269	0.0	205,968	12.0
1980-1990	-171,678	-4.7	-68,283	-4.1	-103,395	-5.2
1990-1995	81,862	2.2	23,711	1.3	58,151	3.0

** Percent net migration is the net migration number divided by the population at the beginning of the period multiplied by 100.*

*** Urban areas are metropolitan counties and rural areas are nonmetropolitan counties as designated at the end of each time period.*

Sources: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service and Calculations of author.

Many of those who left have been young adults. During the out-migration of the 1950s, Kentucky experienced a net loss of 134,000 persons who were 20-29 years old, 30 percent of this age cohort. Young persons have a general propensity to move more than other segments of the population. Life-cycle options dealing with higher education, career choice, and marriage often involve relocation. Young people in Kentucky, especially those from rural areas, have been the most likely to leave home. Rates of net out-migration for young adults, as shown in Table 1.2, have been two to three times greater than those for the total population since 1950.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE 1.2
Net Migration by Age in Kentucky, 1950-1990

	1950-1960		1960-1970		1970-1980		1980-1990	
	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%
All Ages	-389	-13.2	-154	-5.1	206	6.4	-171	-4.7
0-9	-54	-8.6	-27	-4.1	14	2.4	-17	-3.1
10-19	-77	-15.1	-17	-3.1	67	10.4	-31	-5.1
20-29	-133	-29.8	-86	-23.6	10	2.3	-74	-12.0
30-39	-66	-16.8	-17	-4.6	32	9.3	-22	-4.6
40-49	-32	-9.7	-6	-1.7	25	7.0	-16	-4.6
50-59	-17	-6.4	-2	-0.8	22	6.9	-2	-0.8
60-69	-4	-2.1	4	2.2	20	8.1	17	0.0
70 and over	-2	-2.0	-1	-0.9	12	5.8	-6	-1.9

* Age is measured as of end of each decade
Sources: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, and calculations of author

Moreover, migration has depleted rural Kentucky of its most valuable human resources. Out-migration has selected not only the young, but often the more educated, ambitious, and courageous. The out-migration of young adults over decades has contributed to an undereducated workforce and a decline in fertility in rural areas. The more educated and skilled often find local job opportunities limited; their resultant departure decreases the human capital of the labor force. Young adults are also the most fertile segment of the population and their loss in combination with declining birth rates has resulted in a drop in the number of births in many rural areas.

Urban areas in Kentucky, on the other hand, have generally attracted migrants. Cities and suburbs have collectively experienced net in-migration in every decade since 1940, except the 1970-80 decade. Over this century, Kentucky's urban areas have ridden the waves of industrial growth, deindustrialization, and postindustrial development. Each wave of development has been associated with

TABLE 1.3
In-migrants and Out-migrants by Age, Urban and Rural Kentucky, 1985-1990

	State Migrants				Urban Migrants				Rural Migrants			
	In		Out		In		Out		In		Out	
	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%
All Migrants (5+ yrs, 1990)	304	100	298	100	218	100	210	100	189	100	191	100
5-19	78	25.7	73	24.5	50	23.0	50	23.8	53	28.0	48	25.2
20-29	85	28.2	92	30.9	69	32.0	61	29.0	49	26.3	64	34.0
30-44	87	28.7	85	28.7	64	29.4	63	30.4	48	25.6	47	24.6
45-64	37	12.3	31	10.7	23	10.6	24	11.6	26	13.8	19	10.3
65+	15	5.1	15	5.2	10	5.0	11	5.2	11	6.2	11	5.9

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STP28 Special County to County Migration Tally

major population movements. In the first half of the century, rural to urban migration enabled Ashland, Covington, Louisville, and other cities to meet the massive labor requirements of industrialization. Beginning in the 1970s, the downsizing of manufacturing and the deindustrialization associated with the Rust Belt coincided with the labor force entrance of the first Baby Boomers. An oversupply of labor resulted in out-migration from Kentucky's major cities. Kentucky's urban areas, however, have led the state into the transition from a goods-producing economy to one based on information. Exemplified by the growth of Lexington, Kentucky's cities currently compete for skilled and educated workers in a national and global marketplace.

As the state's urban populations have grown, they have become more dispersed. Out-migration from the state's older, industrial central cities has been countered by growth in the suburbs and exurban areas. Metropolitan counties[5] in Kentucky have steadily increased in number from six in 1960 to eight in 1970, 17 in 1980, 20 in 1990, and 22 in 1995. Moreover, peripheral metropolitan counties, those without a major central city, like Boone and Oldham, have been among the fastest growing counties in the state over the last three decades.

[5] Metropolitan counties are those that comprise Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), a Census Bureau designation. Counties are added to MSAs based on thresholds of population density and growth, commuting patterns, and employment structure.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Rural Growth in the 1970s

The only decade of sustained population growth and net in-migration for rural Kentucky in this century was the 1970s. Migrants to rural Kentucky in this decade outnumbered those leaving by over 200,000. The Kentucky experience was part of a national rural renaissance, and several factors contributed to this population turnaround. The oil embargo by Middle East nations led to increased production and speculation in Kentucky's fossil fuel industries. Employment in coal mining also increased. In addition, innovations in production and transportation facilitated the relocation of manufacturing firms to rural locales to take advantage of lower labor and other costs. As a result, the demand for rural labor increased, retaining local workers and attracting newcomers. These economic factors were complimented by urban to rural migration that was not economically motivated. Many moved to rural areas to enhance the quality of their lives, removing themselves from the congestion, pollution, and rat race associated with urban life. Rural areas presented the promise of a simpler, more gratifying lifestyle.[6]

Kentucky's rural turnaround was short-lived, however. By the end of the 1970s, demand for rural workers had fallen and net out-migration had returned. During the 1980s, rural Kentucky experienced net out-migration once again, losing 100,000 people, 5 percent of its population.

Recent Migration

TABLE 1.4
In-migrants and Out-migrants by Age and Education, Urban and Rural Kentucky 1985-1990

	State Migrants				Urban Migrants				Rural Migrants			
	In		Out		In		Out		In		Out	
	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%	# (000s)	%
25 yrs & >	185	100	182	100	134	100	133	100	110	100	109	100
<HS Grad	35	19.3	32	17.9	20	15.0	22	17.1	32	29.0	26	23.9
HS Grad	47	25.8	46	25.5	32	24.0	33	25.0	32	29.3	30	27.5
HS & >	149	80.7	150	82.1	114	85.0	110	82.9	78	71.0	83	76.1
Some Coll	52	28.1	50	27.4	39	29.2	36	27.3	26	24.	27	25.4
Degree & >	49	26.7	53	29.3	42	31.8	40	30.6	19	17.4	25	23.2
25-34 yrs	83	100	88	100	64	100	62	100	45	100	52	100
<HS Grad	9	11.8	10	11.6	6	9.8	6	10.9	8	18.0	8	15.3
HS Grad	22	27.2	22	25.8	15	23.9	15	24.8	14	32.9	14	28.6
HS & >	73	88.2	78	88.4	58	90.2	55	89.1	37	82.0	44	84.7
Some Coll	26	32.1	25	29.4	20	31.8	18	28.9	13	29.7	15	28.8
Degree & >	24	28.9	29	33.2	22	34.6	22	35.3	8	19.4	14	27.3
35-54 yrs	70	100	67	100	50	100	50	100	41	100	39	21.6
<HS Grad	12	17.1	10	15.4	6	12.5	7	14.3	10	26.4	8	28.7
HS Grad	18	25.4	17	25.6	12	24.2	12	25.4	12	29.6	11	78.4
HS & >	58	82.9	57	84.6	44	87.5	43	85.7	30	73.6	30	26.6
Some Coll	20	28.6	19	28.8	15	30.0	14	28.8	10	25.0	10	23.1
Degree & >	20	28.9	20	30.1	16	33.3	15	31.5	7	19.1	9	
55+ yrs	30	100	26	100	19	100	20	100	23	100	18	100
<HS Grad	13	44.7	11	45.0	7	38.8	8	43.4	12	54.9	9	53.5
HS Grad	7	23.1	6	24.0	4	23.8	4	24.6	5	21.7	3	21.8
HS & >	17	55.3	14	55.0	11	61.2	11	56.6	10	45.1	8	46.5
Some Coll	5	16.5	4	17.2	3	16.7	3	16.4	2	12.7	2	12.7
Degree & >	4	15.7	3	13.8	3	18.7	2	13.6	2	10.7	2	12.0

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, STP26-Special County to County Migration Tally

Following a decade of stagnant population growth, Kentucky in the 1990s has been on a growth trajectory. From 1980 to 1990, the state population rose by less than 1 percent. In the first half of this decade, however, the number of Kentuckians has increased by 173,000 or 5 percent. Recent growth has been fueled by net in-migration which has benefited rural areas more than urban areas. Net migration resulted in gains of 58,000 in rural areas and 24,000 in urban areas.

[6] For a review of the rural population turnaround in the U.S. during the 1970s, see Brown, D.L. and Wardwell, J.M. (Eds.). (1980). *New directions in urban-rural migration: The population turnaround in rural America*. New York: Academic Press.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Many of the recent migrants to rural Kentucky have been older, beyond their fertile years. During the recent growth, fertility in rural Kentucky has decreased while mortality has increased. While these changes are primarily the result of aging in place of the population and a general decline in fertility rates, recent migration, by sometimes replacing the young with the old, has contributed to a shift in the balance of natural increase in rural areas.[7] Natural increase is the demographic term for population growth resulting from the difference between the number of births and deaths. As presented in Table 1.3, recent in-migrants to rural areas have been more likely than recent out-migrants to be aged 45 years and older; those leaving rural areas were more likely to be younger adults. During the 1985-1990 period, one third of the out-migrants from rural Kentucky were 20-29 years old.

Recent migration in Kentucky, moreover, has resulted in a brain drain for rural areas. Newcomers to the state's rural area have been less educated than those who left. As shown in Table 1.4, of migrants aged 25 years and over who exited rural areas during the 1985-1990 period, 23 percent had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. Only 17 percent of the comparable in-migration stream were college educated. However, older migrants with less educational attainment may be lowering the overall education levels on the rural migration instream. However, even looking at the education of younger adults alone, the same pattern is shown. Recent migrants aged 25-34 years coming to rural Kentucky were less educated than their counterparts who left.

In urban areas of Kentucky, on the other hand, recent migration has reflected the dynamics of the postindustrial economy and the increasing demand for human capital. Gross migration, the sum of in- and out-streams, in urban areas has been 10 percent higher than in rural areas, and urban migrants whether entering or leaving are more educated than their rural counterparts. Roughly one third of recent in-migrants and out-migrants had a college degree. Those coming to urban areas, however, were slightly more educated than those leaving. Moreover, in-migrants were more likely to be young adults, 20-29 years old, than out-migrants. Migration in recent years has enhanced the human capital of the state's urban areas.

Implications for the 21st Century

As noted earlier, coming home is a significant aspect of recent migration in Kentucky. Given the volume of out-migration over past decades, one may speculate on the prospects for a massive return of natives in coming decades. Likely to increase in volume, this migration is important because it signifies two emerging trends for the next century. These trends are non-economic migration and the well documented aging of the population.

Non-economic migration is motivated by the desire to improve the quality of one's life more than one's economic condition. Rural homesteaders, part of the back-to-the-land movement, represent in many ways the essence of this migration; and while they are present in Kentucky, their numbers are small. Non-economic migration, however, is typically supported by economic means and includes the migration of retirees and the movement of urban populations to the rural fringe of metropolitan areas, two migration streams which are relatively large in Kentucky and expected to increase in volume.

Kentucky is very likely to be a major destination for retirees in the next century. The state's abundance of natural amenities is certainly a strong draw. Recent rural migration has been strongest to areas near the state's large recreational lakes, for example. States will be in competition with each other for retirees, much like they are today for automobile manufacturing plants. Competition will increase as Baby Boomers, who prepared for retirement with pensions, savings, and investments, exit the labor force.

Migration to the rural outskirts of the metropolitan areas reflects increases in household income and changes in the geography of economic activity. Although these trends generally indicate improvement in the quality of life, there are potential problems to consider. Residential developments push farther into the rural landscape often manifesting in gated enclaves for the well-off. The movement of urban workers and their families to the rural setting has involved, almost exclusively,

[7] See Kentucky State Data Center (1996, Spring/Summer). *Kentucky State Data Center News, 14.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the relocation of middle- and upper-income whites. The centrifugal redistribution of metropolitan populations has resulted in greater geographic separation among races and ethnic groups and between rich and poor. Louisville, Covington, and other central cities have become increasingly comprised of minority and poverty populations. Moreover, the movement of urbanites to rural areas on the metropolitan fringe can strain the institutional infrastructure of the receiving communities. Problems of institutional overload may arise as the influx of new migrants places demands in excess of the carrying capacity of local schools and services.

Despite a general shift in population towards the hinterland, rural areas have not stemmed the tide of youth migration. Recent population growth has masked the ongoing departure of young adults. The out-migration of youth, combined with the recent in-migration of retirees, has shifted the age structure of some rural areas towards the top. Consequently, from 1990 to 1995, the number of deaths exceeded the number of live births in 13 rural counties.[5] Unless areas such as these sustain a regular stream of in-migration, they will depopulate.

The long-term out-migration of young people has resulted in labor shortages, especially for entry level and seasonal workers. To fill this void, we see, at least anecdotally, the beginning of a new migration stream to Kentucky with origins south of the U.S. border. Migrant Latino farm laborers can be seen in Kentucky cutting and stripping tobacco. A chicken processing plant in a rural Kentucky county is raided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for hiring illegal Hispanic aliens. Over time, seasonal farm labor migration has resulted in the permanent settlement of Latinos from Texas to Michigan. As Kentucky begins to participate in the mid-continent labor migration stream, we will see if Latino newcomers are readily accepted by the heretofore homogeneous host communities.

The influx of retirees and exurbanites brings new wealth to rural locales. Population growth also increases the demand for service jobs. Whether newcomers, however, will be a new source of vitality and entrepreneurship for their host communities is uncertain. Migrants may oppose economic development which they perceive as a threat to the rural lifestyle they desire. In addition, new residential uses of rural land compete with traditional agricultural land use, making it more difficult for farm families to stay in agriculture, especially from generation to generation. We can expect that many rural communities will be dramatically transformed *vis-à-vis* their differential flows of in- and out-migration.

That so many have wanted to come home, and have, bodes well for Kentucky. Moreover, since 1970, Kentucky has generally gained more migrants than we have lost; and the departure of young adults has slowed. Whether native or non-native, urban worker or rural retiree, Kentucky has become a desirable destination. We will see if returning natives help ease the problems so often associated with an influx of migrants. Sociocultural differences between newcomers and old-timers may lead to a conflict situation, or culture clash, in the values and normative expectations between the two groups. Hopefully, migrants coming home to Kentucky, who left years ago because of undesirable circumstances, are aware and concerned that many of those same problems persist for today's youth.

[5] See Kentucky State Data Center. (1996, Spring/Summer). *Kentucky State Data Center News, 14*.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE